

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NDJAMENA 0544

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TAGS: PFOR, CD, US

SUBJ: MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER ON EXPULSION OF AMERICANS

REFS: A. NDJAMENA 503, B. NGJAMENA 519, C. STATE 49297

1. FOREIGN MINISTER RECEIVED ME MORNING MARCH 3. I BEGAN BY PRESENTING LITERAL TRANSLATION PROTEST OF EXPULSION ACCORDING TO LANGUAGE PROVIDED REFTEL C. FONMIN INTERRUPTED ME IN MID-PRESENTATION TO SAY THAT HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND U.S. NEED FOR DEMAND FOR EXPLANATION OF WITHDRAWAL. GOC WOULD DECIDE ITSELF AS TO WHETHER INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS HAD OCCURRED. I NODDED AND FINISHED DEMARCHE. FONMIN ALLEGED ACCUSATIONS WERE BASED ON FACTS AND THAT IT WAS NOT CUSTOM OF GOC TO PRESENT THESE FACTS OR REASONS PRIOR TO DEPARTURE FROM COUNTRY OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS CONCERNED. I REPLIED THAT MFA HAD BEEN NOTIFIED OF DEPARTURE OF INDIVIDUALS AND NOW USG WOULD LIKE SOME REASONS. FONMIN HEDGED SOMEWHAT AND SAID THAT REASONS COULD BE FORTH-COMING IF HE WERE ASKED FOR THEM. I REPLIED THAT I WAS ASKING FOR SUCH REASONS NOW AND PRESENTED HIM WITH THE AIDE MEMOIRE IN WRITING. THE FONMIN SAID HE WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH ME IN DUE COURSE.

2. THEN, APPARENTLY TRYING TO MODERATE TONE OF CONVERSATION,
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FONMIN STATED ONCE AGAIN NEED FOR RESPECT FOR NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY OF LARGE AND SMALL NATIONS. HE REFERRED TO CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR LITTLE ON FEBRUARY 20, AND SAID THAT HE HAD HOPED HE HAD MADE CLEAR THE POSITION OF THE SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL ON QUESTION SOVEREIGNTY. HE THEN DESCRIBED (AS HE HAD WITH AMBASSADOR LITTLE) HIS CHAGRIN AT NOT HAVING BEEN RECEIVED BY THE SECRETARY DURING LAST FALL'S TRIP TO WASHINGTON DURING THE UNGA, DESPITE THE FACT HE HAD PERSONAL LETTERS FOR PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY. HE ADDED THAT HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY SECRETARY COULD NOT SPARE HIM FIVE MINUTES WHEN HIS OTHER AFRICAN COLLEAGUES HAD HAD PERSONAL MEETINGS. I REPLIED I WAS AWARE AMBASSADOR LITTLE HAD EXPLAINED TO HIM THE COMPLEXITIES OF SCHEDULING APPOINTMENTS FOR THE SECRETARY WHEN ALMOST LITERALLY THE WHOLE WORLD DESCENDED ON HIS DOOR DURING A FEW AUTUMN WEEKS. SPEAKING PERSONALLY, HE SAID, CHAD, LIKE MANY OTHER SMALL AND POOR COUNTRIES, HAD IMMEDIATE NEEDS THAT MUST BE MET. THERE ARE NOT MANY SOURCES TO SATISFY THESE NEEDS. THUS, WHEN ONE SUPERPOWER IS UNWILLING OR UNABLE TO SUPPLY THEM, COUNTRIES MUST TURN TO THE OTHER SUPERPOWER. ALTHOUGH THIS WAS TO HIS PERSONAL REGRET, IT WAS THE WAY THINGS HAD TO BE DONE.

3. RETURNING AGAIN TO MY THEME, I ASKED THE FONMIN IF THE RECENT ACTION OF THE GOC SHOULD BE INTERPRETED AS AN INDICATION OF CHADIAN DISPLEASURE WITH THE GENERAL STATUS OF U.S.-CHADIAN RELATIONS. THE FONMIN REPLIED, "NO, NOT AT ALL", THAT EVENT WAS VERY MINOR AND SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED AS AFFECTING THE FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN CHAD AND THE U.S. AS A LARGE COUNTRY, THE FONMIN CONTINUED, SURELY THE U.S. OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO FIND RELATIVELY PROMPTLY ANOTHER CULTURAL CENTER DIRECTOR AND ANOTHER SECOND SECRETARY TO REPLACE THOSE WHO HAD DEPARTED. I SAID IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO REPLACE PEOPLE WHO HAD BEEN ASKED TO LEAVE WHEN ONE DID NOT KNOW WHY THEY HAD BEEN ASKED TO LEAVE. THE FONMIN AGAIN SAID THIS COULD BE DISCUSSED AT SOME FUTURE TIME. THE FONMIN SAID THAT IT WAS NOT THE DESIRE OF CHAD TO GIVE ANY PUBLICITY WHATSOEVER TO THIS MATTER BUT THAT IF THERE WERE RETALIATORY ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE U.S., THE GOVERNMENT OF CHAD WOULD TAKE UNSPECIFIED STEPS WITH REGARD TO A MUCH LARGER AND MORE SERIOUS PROBLEM, AS HE HAD NOTED IN OUR LAST CONVERSATION. (NO MENTION OF WATERGATE PER SE THIS TIME AROUND.) I STATED THAT IT WAS NOT THE WISH OF THE USG THAT THIS MATTER SHOULD HAVE PUBLICITY AND THAT I HAD CAREFULLY INSTRUCTED THE MISSION STAFF

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THAT THERE WAS TO BE NO COMMENT WHATSOEVER ON THE TRANSFER OF THE INDIVIDUALS CONCERNED. IF THESE ALLEGATIONS WERE PUBLISHED IN THE PRESS OR MADE ON THE RADIO, OR OTHERWISE ANNOUNCED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF CHAD, THE USG WOULD HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO STATE THAT IT FOUND THE ALLEGATIONS WITHOUT BASE AND WITHOUT DOCUMENTATION. IN CONCLUSION, I STRESSED ONCE AGAIN THE SERIOUS-

NESS WITH WHICH THE USG LOOKED UPON THIS AFFAIR AND URGED THAT FRANK DISCUSSION BE HELD AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

4. COMMENT: IT APPARENT THAT FONMIN FINDS HIMSELF ON VERY SHORT LEASH AND THAT HE IN ALL PROBABILITY DOES NOT NOW HAVE AUTHORITY TO DO MORE THAN REITERATE PRESENTATION HE ORIGINALLY MADE. IT POSSIBLE THAT REFERENCE MADE REGARDING TURNING FROM ONE SUPER-POWER TO THE OTHER WAS MEANT AS HINT OR POSSIBLY WARNING OF REAL REASONS BEHIND EXPULSION. ON OTHER HAND, HIS SOMEHWAT BELABORED EFFORT TO TREAT EXPULSION AS MINOR MATTER MAY INDICATE RASH AND EMOTIONAL DECISION TAKEN BY PRESIDENT, WHO SOMEWHAT FRANTICALLY IS LOOKING FOR SCAPEGOATS FOR HUMILIATION OF REBEL ACTIVITIES IN NORTH. PRESENCE OF FRENCH NEGOTIATING TEAM FRENCH-CHADIAN BILATERALS, PLUS IMMINENT ARRIVAL OF GOF FONMIN CHIRAC, ARE NOW MAIN FOCUS OF GOC ATTENTION. I BELIEVE WE CAN WITHOUT HARM TO POLICY INTERESTS FOLLOW A QUIET BUSINESS-AS-USUAL POLICY FOR SEVERAL DAYS WHILE WE ASSESS SITUATION.DWYER

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